



The Forsaken Merman

POEMS OF EAST AND WEST

Selected and Edited by
DOREEN W. WICKREMASINGHE



HUMPHREY MILFORD
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1937

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

AMEN HOUSE, LONDON, E.C. 4

EDINBURGH GLASGOW NEW YORK

TORONTO MELBOURNE CAPETOWN

BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS

HUMPHREY MILFORD

PUBLISHER TO THE

UNIVERSITY

First published, 1937

PRINTED IN INDIA AT THE G. S. PRESS, MADRAS

THIS ANTHOLOGY
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO MY FORMER PUPILS IN CEYLON
WHOSE APPRECIATION OF THE POEMS COMPRISING IT
HAS LED TO ITS PUBLICATION

PREFATORY NOTE

The purpose of this anthology is twofold. It seeks on the one hand to place before girls and boys poems they will enjoy, and on the other to impress upon them that poetry is universal and not peculiar to one nation or people.

The aim of literature in schools has always been, presumably, to create a taste for further reading in adult life. In practice, however, the classroom has proved a burial-ground for all such desires. If a love for literature persisted after school life, it was generally in spite of, rather than because of, the lessons in school. Selections in this anthology do not then necessarily include the finest poems in the language but those deemed suitable for, and above all interesting to, the developing mind.

Translations from eleven languages have been included, although, as the anthology is for English-speaking children, the works of English poets predominate. Of the Eastern poets those of India are most numerous as the need for suitable selections for India and Ceylon is the primary object of the publication.

The translated poems may be treated as fairly typical of the lands of their origin. The teacher should preface them, therefore, with remarks on the country as a whole.

It should be realized that the notes on the lives of the English and Indian poets are not attempted biographies but mere abstractions to show that poets are human beings who grow from romping children to men of flesh

and blood, not nightmares of learning, dry old sticks fit only for the glass cases of a Natural History Museum.

Sincere thanks are due to Miss E. Helen d'Alwis, Miss Chandra Ranhotty and Mr D. B. Dhanapala for whose helpful suggestions and valuable assistance I am most grateful.

Thanks for permission to use copyright material are due to: John Murray for six fragments from the Japanese from *The Master Singers of Japan* and for Miss Dulcie L. Smith's translation of 'Woo not the World' from *Poems of Mu'Tamid*; Mr Robert Hillyer for his translation of 'The Other World' from *The Book of the Dead*; Constable and Co., Ltd. for Arthur Waley's translations of 'Sailing Homeward' by Chan Fang-Sheng and 'On the Birth of his Son' by Su Tung-Po from *170 Chinese Poems*; Mr E. Powys Mathers for his translation of 'The Emperor' by Tu Fu; the University of Chicago Press for 'Poverty' from *The Panchatantra* translated by Arthur W. Ryder; Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd. for Arthur W. Ryder's translation of 'Autumn' from Kalidasa's *The Seasons*, and for G. K. Chesterton's 'The Donkey'; Mr P. E. Matheson for his translation of 'A Night in a Village' by Ivan Savvich Nikitin; Dr L. V. Snowman for his translation of Chaim N. Bialik's 'The Cemetery'; Messrs. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. for 'Mortality' from *Songs of the Forest*, translated by Shamrao Hivale and Verrier Elwin; Messrs. William Heinemann, Ltd. for Sarojini Naidu's 'The Gift of India' and 'Hindu Cradle Song'; Harindranath Chattopadhyaya and Shama's Publishing House for

'The Earthen Goblet', 'The Game', 'Forgiveness', 'Lazy', and 'After Sunset'; Miss E. Helen d'Alwis for 'To a Buddha'; Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. and Dr Rabindranath Tagore for 'The Hero' and 'Where the mind is without fear' from his *Collected Poems*, and for 'Blossomed a Flower'; Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd. for Sir Edwin Arnold's 'A Rajput Nurse'; the author's representatives and the publishers, Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., for an extract from Rupert Brooke's 'The Great Lover'; Sir Henry Newbolt for 'He Fell Among Thieves' and 'The Torch of Life' from *Poems New and Old* (John Murray); Mr W. B. Yeats and Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. for 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree' from *Collected Poems*; Mr Walter de la Mare for 'The Listeners'; Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. for 'Stupidity Street' and 'The Bells of Heaven' from Mr. Ralph Hodgson's *Poems*; Messrs. Jonathan Cape, Ltd. for Mr W. H. Davies' 'Leisure'; Mrs. Rudyard Kipling and Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. for 'If' from Rudyard Kipling's *Rewards and Fairies*; the author's executors and Messrs. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. for 'Unconquerable' from W. E. Henley's *Poems*; Mr John Masefield for 'Sea-Fever' from *The Collected Poems of John Masefield* (William Heinemann, Ltd.).

D. W. W.

CONTENTS

PART I: EASTERN AND OTHER TRANSLATED POEMS

	PAGE
I. SIGHS. <i>From the Japanese of Kuramochi No Asomi Chitose</i> ..	3
II. NEW YEAR. <i>From the Japanese of Ikuju</i> ..	4
III. FROGS CROAKING. <i>From the Japanese of Motoyoshi No Miko</i> ..	5
IV. TRANSCIENCE. <i>From the Japanese of Komachi</i> ..	6
V. POVERTY. <i>From the Japanese of Ransetsu</i> ..	7
VI. SECLUSION. <i>From the Japanese of Yorihiro</i> ..	8
VII. THE OTHER WORLD. <i>From the Egyptian. Translated by Robert Hillyer</i> ..	9
VIII. SAILING HOMEWARD. <i>From the Chinese of Chan Fang-Sheng. Translated by Arthur Waley</i> ..	11
IX. THE EMPEROR. <i>From the Chinese of Tu Fu. Translated by E. Powys Mathers</i> ..	12
X. ON THE BIRTH OF HIS SON. <i>From the Chinese of Su Tung-Po. Translated by Arthur Waley</i> ..	13
XI. HERACLITUS. <i>From the Greek of Callimachus. Translated by W. Cory</i> ..	14
XII. POVERTY. <i>From the Sanskrit. Translated by Arthur W. Ryder</i> ..	15

CONTENTS

	PAGE
XIII. AUTUMN. <i>From the Sanskrit of Kalidasa.</i> <i>Translated by Arthur W. Ryder</i> ..	16
XIV. A NIGHT IN A VILLAGE. <i>From the</i> <i>Russian of Ivan Savvich Nikitin. Trans-</i> <i>lated by P. E. Matheson</i> ..	18
XV. WOO NOT THE WORLD. <i>From the</i> <i>Arabian of Mu'Tamid. Translated by</i> <i>Dulcie L. Smith</i> ..	19
XVI. <i>From THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR</i> <i>KHAYYAM. Translated by Edward</i> <i>Fitzgerald</i> ..	20
XVII. THE CEMETERY. <i>From the Hebrew of</i> <i>Chaim N. Bialik. Translated by L. V.</i> <i>Snowman</i> ..	21

PART II : INDIAN POEMS

I. MORTALITY. <i>Translated from the</i> <i>Gondhi by Shamrao Hivale and Verrier</i> <i>Elwin</i> ..	25
II. THE GIFT OF INDIA. <i>Sarojini Naidu</i> ..	26
III. HINDU CRADLE SONG. <i>Sarojini Naidu</i>	28
IV. THE EARTHEN GOBLET. <i>Harindra-</i> <i>nath Chattopadhyaya</i> ..	29
V. THE GAME. <i>Harindranath Chatto-</i> <i>padhyaya</i> ..	30
VI. FORGIVENESS : <i>Harindranath Chatto-</i> <i>padhyaya</i> ..	31
VII. LAZY. <i>Harindranath Chattopadhyaya</i> ..	32
VIII. AFTER SUNSET. <i>Harindranath Chatto-</i> <i>padhyaya</i> ..	34

CONTENTS

	PAGE
IX. TO A BUDDHA. <i>E. H. D'Alwis</i> ..	35
X. THE HERO. <i>Rabindranath Tagore</i> ..	36
XI. WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR. <i>Rabindranath Tagore</i> ..	39
XII. BLOSSOMED A FLOWER. <i>Rabindra- nath Tagore</i> ..	40

PART III : ENGLISH POEMS

I. THE LADY OF SHALOTT. <i>Lord Tennyson</i> ..	43
II. THE EAGLE. <i>Lord Tennyson</i> ..	51
III. LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI. <i>John Keats</i> ..	52
IV. PATRIOTISM. <i>Sir Walter Scott</i> ..	55
V. ON CHILLON. <i>Lord Byron</i> ..	56
VI. ABOU BEN ADHEM. <i>Leigh Hunt</i> ..	57
VII. ODE ON A GRECIAN URN. <i>John Keats</i>	58
VIII. ON HIS BLINDNESS. <i>John Milton</i> ..	61
IX. ON A BAD SINGER. <i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> ..	62
X. PIPPA'S SONG. <i>Robert Browning</i> ..	63
XI. THE FORSAKEN MERMAN. <i>Matthew Arnold</i> ..	64
XII. KUBLA KHAN. <i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i>	71
XIII. THE SOLITARY REAPER. <i>William Wordsworth</i> ..	74
XIV. From MORTE D'ARTHUR. <i>Lord Tennyson</i> ..	76
XV. TO THE MOON. <i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i> ..	77

CONTENTS

	PAGE
XVI. DAFFODILS. <i>William Wordsworth</i> ..	78
XVII. From <i>HIAWATHA</i> . <i>H. W. Longfellow</i> ..	80
XVIII. From <i>THE WEST WIND</i> . <i>Percy Bysshe Shelley</i> ..	82
XIX. THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS. <i>Leigh Hunt</i> ..	83
XX. From <i>THE ANCIENT MARINER</i> . <i>Samuel Taylor Coleridge</i> ..	85
XXI. DEATH. <i>Thomas Hood</i> ..	90
XXII. SONG OF THE LOTOS-EATERS. <i>Lord Tennyson</i> ..	91
XXIII. THE JACKDAW OF RHEIMS. <i>R. H. Barham</i> ..	98

PART IV : FROM THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

I. From <i>HAMLET</i> ..	109
II. From <i>HENRY IV</i> ..	110
III. From <i>AS YOU LIKE IT</i> ..	112
IV. From <i>JULIUS CÆSAR</i> ..	114

PART V : MODERN ENGLISH POEMS

I. A RAJPUT NURSE. <i>Sir Edwin Arnold</i> ..	119
II. THE DONKEY. <i>G. K. Chesterton</i> ..	125
III. From <i>THE GREAT LOVER</i> . <i>Rupert Brooke</i> ..	126
IV. HE FELL AMONG THIEVES. <i>Sir Henry Newbolt</i> ..	129
V. THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE. <i>W. B. Yeats</i> ..	132
VI. THE LISTENERS. <i>Walter de la Mare</i> ..	133

PART I

EASTERN AND OTHER TRANSLATED POEMS

I

SIGHS

The mists that drift across the hill—
 High Hill of Ohonu—
They are my sighs that hover chill,
Of sorrow born across the hill—
 High Hill of Ohonu !

II

NEW YEAR

Pine-branch at the door
On the road to the unknown
 A milestone marking,
To some a way of gladness,
To some a path of sorrow.

III

FROGS CROAKING

The croaking frogs that find their lodging here,
Would seem to feel the loneliness of night
As much as I, so plaintive is their cry
Through the long hours until the morning light.

IV

TRANSCIENCE

Swift fade the hues of hill and wold,
Glories of Spring and Fall depart,
More evanescent still, behold
The fading blossoms of the heart !

V

POVERTY

On a cold, snowy morning,
Somebody's child picking up,
With stiff, chilled fingers,
Empty tins in the street.

VI

SECLUSION

My humble dwelling, creeper-clad,
So lonely lies,
That day by day none visit me
Save the fire-flies !

VII

THE OTHER WORLD

From the Egyptian of The Book of the Dead

Here are cakes for thy body,
Cool water for thy throat,
Sweet breezes for thy nostrils,
And thou art satisfied.

No longer dost thou stumble
Upon thy chosen path,
From thy mind all evil
And darkness fall away.

Here by the river,
Drink and bathe thy limbs,
Or cast thy net, and surely
It shall be filled with fish.

The holy cow of Hapi
Shall give thee of her milk,
The ale of gods triumphant
Shall be thy daily draught.

White linen is thy tunic,
Thy sandals shine with gold ;
Victorious thy weapons,
That death come not again.

Now upon the whirlwind
Thou followest thy Prince,
Now thou hast refreshment
Under the leafy tree.

Take wings to climb the zenith,
Or sleep in fields of Peace ;
By day the Sun shall keep thee,
By night the rising Star.

Tr. ROBERT HILLYER

VIII

SAILING HOMEWARD

From the Chinese

Cliffs that rise a thousand feet
Without a break,
Lake that stretches a hundred miles
Without a wave,
Sands that are white through all the year,
Without a stain,
Pine-tree woods, winter and summer
Ever-green,
Streams that for ever flow and flow
Without a pause,
Trees that for twenty thousand years
Your vows have kept,
You have suddenly healed the pain of a traveller's
heart,
And moved his brush to write a new song.

Tr. ARTHUR WALEY

IX

THE EMPEROR

From the Chinese

On a throne of new gold the Son of the Sky is
sitting among his Mandarins. He shines with
jewels and is like a sun surrounded by stars.

The Mandarins speak gravely of grave things ;
but the Emperor's thought has flown out by
the open window.

In her pavilion of porcelain the Empress is sitting
among her women. She is like a bright
flower among leaves.

She dreams that her beloved stays too long at
council, and wearily she moves her fan.

A breathing of perfumed air kisses the face of the
Emperor.

'My beloved moves her fan, and sends me a
perfume from her lips.'

Towards the pavilion of porcelain walks the
Emperor, shining with his jewels ; and leaves
his grave Mandarins to look at each other in
silence.

X

ON THE BIRTH OF HIS SON

From the Chinese

Families, when a child is born
Want it to be intelligent.
I, through intelligence,
Having wrecked my whole life,
Only hope the baby will prove
Ignorant and stupid.
Then he will crown a tranquil life
By becoming a Cabinet Minister.

Tr. ARTHUR WALEY

XI

HERACLITUS

From the Greek

They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you
were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter
tears to shed.
I wept as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him
down the sky.

And now that thou art lying, my dear old
Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales
awake ;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he
cannot take.

Tr. WILLIAM CORY

XII

POVERTY¹

From the Sanskrit of The Panchatantra

A beggar to the graveyard hied
And there 'Friend corpse, arise', he cried ;
'One moment lift my heavy weight
Of poverty ; for I of late
Grow weary, and desire instead
Your comfort ; you are good and dead.'
The corpse was silent. He was sure
'Twas better to be dead than poor.

ARTHUR W. RYDER

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XIII

AUTUMN

From the Sanskrit of The Seasons

The autumn comes, a maiden fair
 In slenderness and grace,
With nodding rice-stems in her hair
 And lilies in her face.
In flowers of grasses she is clad ;
 And as she moves along,
Birds greet her with their cooing glad
 Like bracelets' tinkling song.

A diadem adorns the night
 Of multitudinous stars ;
Her silken robe is white moonlight,
 Set free from cloudy bars ;
And on her face (the radiant moon)
 Bewitching smiles are shown :
She seems a slender maid who soon
 Will be a woman grown.

Over the rice-fields, laden plants
 Are shivering to the breeze ;
While in his brisk caresses dance
 The blossom-burdened trees ;

He ruffles every lily-pond
Where blossoms kiss and part,
And stirs with lover's fancies fond
The young man's eager heart.

Tr. ARTHUR W. RYDER

XIV

A NIGHT IN A VILLAGE

From the Russian

Sultry air, the smoke of shavings,
Dirt spread over all,
Feet and benches dirty ; cobwebs
To adorn the wall :
Smoke-begrimed each cottage chamber ;
Bread and water stale ;
Spinners coughing, children crying—
Want and woe prevail.
Hand to mouth lifelong they labour,
Then a pauper's grave—
Ah ! what need to learn the lesson—
'Trust, my soul, be brave !'

Tr. P. E. MATHESON

XVI

THE RUBAIYAT

From the Persian

Oh, come with old Khayyam, and leave the wise
To talk ; one thing is certain, that Life flies ;
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies ;
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went.

Ah, fill the cup ;—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our feet :
Unborn Tomorrow and dead Yesterday
Why fret about them if Today be sweet ?

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ
Moves on : nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line
Nor all thy Tears wash out a word of it.

Ah, Love ! could you and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Remould it nearer to the Heart's Desire !

Tr. EDWARD FITZGERALD

XVII

THE CEMETERY

From the Hebrew

The oak-trees whisper softly, and softly to
me they say :
' Come, hide beneath our shadow,
O mortal, there decay !
This tomb, this heap of dust to thy pain
and livelong grief—
Faithful to thee for ever—they will bring relief.
Die not so oft, for life with a thousand
deaths is filled.
Die once, expire for ever,—rest peaceful
and be stilled !
We'll dig thee softly over, smooth out
the silent grave ;
Thy half shall worms consume, but a half
for sap we crave,
For by aid of all we thrive. Life endless
shall be thine,
To blossom forth a flower, or be woven in a vine,
To live in all that liveth wherever thou wilt be,
So come beneath us, come, the flesh
and blood of thee !'

PART II

INDIAN POEMS

I

MORTALITY

A folk poem from the Gondhi

You have built your palace out of chosen stone,
Of stone the doors are also fashioned.
But not for ever will I be living there,
For one day my body will turn into dust.
What is man's body ? It is a spark from the fire ;
It meets water and it is put out.
What is man's body ? It is a bit of straw ;
It meets fire and it is burnt.
What is man's body ? It is a bubble of water broken
by the wind.

Tr. SHAMRAO HIVALE and VERRIER ELWIN

II

THE GIFT OF INDIA

Is there aught you need that my hands withhold,
Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold ?
Lo ! I have flung to the East and West
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Gathered like pearls in their alien graves
Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,
Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
They are strewn like blossoms mown down
by chance
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders
and France.

Can ye measure the grief of the tears I weep
Or compass the woe of the watch I keep ?
Or the pride that thrills thro' my heart's despair,
And the hope that comforts the anguish of prayer ?
And the far sad glorious vision I see
Of the torn red banners of Victory ?

III

HINDU CRADLE SONG

From groves of spice,
O'er fields of rice,
Athwart the lotus stream,
I bring for you
Aglint with dew
A little lovely dream.

Sweet, shut your eyes,
The wild fire-flies
Dance through the fairy neem ;
From the poppy bole
For you I stole
A little lovely dream.

Dear eyes, good night !
In golden light
The stars around you gleam.
On you I press
With soft caress
A little lovely dream.

IV

THE EARTHEN GOBLET

O silent goblet red from head to heel,
How did you feel
When you were being twirled
Upon the Potter's wheel
Before the Potter gave you to the world ?
' I felt a conscious impulse in my clay
To break away
From the great Potter's hand that burned so
warm.

I felt a vast
Feeling of sorrow to be cast
Into my present form.

' Before that fatal hour
That saw me captive on the Potter's wheel
And cast into this crimson goblet-sleep,
I used to feel
The fragrant friendship of a little flower
Whose root was in my bosom buried deep.

' The Potter has drawn out the living breath of me
And given me a form which is the death of me.
My past unshapely natural state was best
With just one flower flaming through my breast.'

V

THE GAME

When the red day was dying
I heard a leper crying.
When stars like flowers came sprouting
I heard a madman shouting.
When the white moon came springing
I heard a harlot singing.
When all the world was sleeping
I heard a woman weeping.
At holy crimson dawning
I heard a drunkard yawning.

Out of the light of day
I heard God calmly say
'Such is the game I play.'

VI

FORGIVENESS

Each moment things forgive you. All your hours
Are crowded with rich penitence unknown
Even to you. Shot birds and trampled flowers
And worms that you have murdered with a stone
In idle sport . . . yea, and the well whose deep
Translucent green and solitary sleep
You stirred into harsh wrinkles with a stick.
Red mud that you have bound into a brick,
Old wood that you have wrought into a barque,
Flame in the street lamp held to light the dark
And fierce red rubies chiselled for a ring . . .
You are forgiven each hour by everything.

VII

LAZY

I am as lazy as the lovely white
Calm clouds which sail along the shore of sky
Slowly, slowly . . .

And as the holy
Mellow colour of the morning light.
I am as lazy as the gold of eve
And as red boughs which sway
In the soft winds which weave
Their dance from day to day.

I am as lazy as the twilight star
Which like a boat a-dreaming lies
Along the river-margin of the skies,
I am as lazy as the cloud a-swoon
In the hot noon,
The gorgeous idling peacock and the moon,
As lazy as the chakor-bird which dreams
Of cool immaculate moonbeams,
And as the sleeping world which at your feet
Dreams like an infant sweet.

I am as lazy as the smell of flowers
And as the form and rhyme and song
Which throng
The poet's idle hours.
As lazy as the secret sleep which lies
Round the womb-cradled infant's tender eyes.
And as the speechless gem
Which sparkles in a king's proud diadem.

VIII

AFTER SUNSET

A soft breath blows from the mouth of the south,
And a gold throb beats in the breast of the west,
And the soft grey shadows take birth on the earth,
And the young stars break to a cry in the sky.

I hear the shrill croaking of frogs in the bogs
While the heavens are wrapped in the
shroud of a cloud,
Lo, over the tree tops the lightning is bright'ning
And the moments are broken asunder
with thunder.

There's not the least echo of feet in the street
But the street-lamp stands with his light through the night,
And the glow-worm scatters a spark in the dark
While the darkness voyages on to the dawn.

Tonight in my heart there's a gleam of a dream
That is written in rhymes on the pages of ages :
The lips of an infant are pressed to the breast
Of the mother who won him with tears
through the years.

IX

TO A BUDDHA

Nay, do not mock me with those carven eyes,
I too might grow beneath that gaze of thine
Desireless, immortal, unerringly wise
Disdaining human dreams. Lo, by thy shrine
A multitude slow-worshipping still goes
Unsandalled bearing perfumed offerings,
While down the avenues of Time still flows
The splendid pageant of all timeless things.

Nay, do not mock me with that ecstasy
Born of a peace abstracted from life's pain,
Love and its futile dream shall trouble me
Too briefly—I shall find myself again ;
And look on thee unpassioned, mute, alone,
An agelessness invincible in stone.

X

THE HERO

Mother, let us imagine we are travelling, and passing through a strange and dangerous country. You are riding in a palanquin and I am trotting by you on a red horse.

It is evening and the sun goes down. The waste of Joradighi lies wan and grey before us. The land is desolate and barren.

You are frightened and thinking—‘I know not where we have come to.’

I say to you, ‘Mother, do not be afraid.’

The meadow is prickly with spiky grass, and through it runs a narrow broken path.

There are no cattle to be seen in the wide field ; they have gone to their village stalls.

It grows dark and dim on the land and sky, and we cannot tell where we are going.

Suddenly you call me and ask me in a whisper, ‘What light is that near the bank ?’

Just then there bursts out a fearful yell, and figures come running towards us.

You sit crouched in your palanquin and repeat the names of the gods in prayer.

The bearers, shaking in terror, hide themselves in the thorny bush.

I shout to you, 'Don't be afraid, mother. I am here.'

With long sticks in their hands and hair all wild about their heads, they come nearer and nearer. I shout, 'Have a care! you villains! One step more and you are dead men.'

They give another terrible yell and rush forward. You clutch my hand and say, 'Dear boy, for heaven's sake, keep away from them.'

I say, 'Mother, just you watch me.'

Then I spur my horse for a wild gallop, and my sword and buckler clash against each other.

The fight becomes so fearful, mother, that it would give you a cold shudder could you see it from a palanquin.

Many of them fly, and a great number are cut to pieces.

I know you are thinking, sitting all by yourself, that your boy must be dead by this time.

But I come to you all stained with blood, and say, 'Mother, the fight is over now.'

You come out and kiss me, pressing me to your heart, and you say to yourself,

‘I don’t know what I should do if I hadn’t my boy to escort me.’

A thousand useless things happen day after day, and why couldn’t such a thing come true by chance ?

It would be like a story in a book.

My brother would say, ‘Is it possible ? I always thought he was so delicate !’

Our village people would all say in amazement, ‘Was it not lucky that the boy was with his mother ?’

XI

WHERE THE MIND IS WITHOUT FEAR

Where the mind is without fear and the head is
held high,

Where knowledge is free ;

Where the world has not been broken up into
fragments by narrow domestic walls ;

Where words come out from the depth of truth ;

Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards
perfection ;

Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its
way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit ;

Where the mind is led forward by Thee into ever-
widening thought and action—

Into that heaven of freedom, my Father,
let my country awake.

XII

BLOSSOMED A FLOWER

Blossomed a flower in cranny of a wall,
Nameless, lineageless, and very small.
'Fie, fie,' garden flowers' reproaches fell,
The rising sun said, 'Brother, art thou well ?'

PART III

ENGLISH POEMS

I

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
 To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
 The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
 Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
 The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand ?
Or at the casement seen her stand ?
Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot :
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers ' 'Tis the fairy
 Lady of Shalott.'

II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.

She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot :
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
' I am half sick of shadows,' said
The Lady of Shalott.

III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot :

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
'Tirra lirra,' by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
 Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
 The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse—
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance—
With a glassy countenance
 Did she look to Camelot.

And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right—
The leaves upon her falling light—
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darkened wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot ;
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
 Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
 The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this ? and what is here ?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer ;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot :
But Lancelot mused a little space ;
He said, ' She has a lovely face ;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott.'

II

THE EAGLE

Fragment

He clasps the crag with crooked hands ;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls ;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

III

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

'O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering ?
The sedge has wither'd from the Lake,
And no birds sing.

'O, what can ail thee, knight-at-arms !
So haggard and so woe begone ?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

'I see a lily on thy brow
With anguish moist and fever dew,
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.'

'I met a Lady in the Meads,
Full beautiful—a fairy's child,
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

'I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone ;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

‘ I set her on my pacing steed
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A fairy’s song.

‘ She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild and manna dew,
And sure in language strange she said,
“ I love thee true.”

‘ She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she wept and sigh’d full sore,
And there I shut her wild wild eyes
With kisses four.

‘ And there she lulléd me asleep,
And there I dream’d—Ah ! woe betide !
The latest dream I ever dreamt
On the cold hill’s side.

‘ I saw pale Kings, and Princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all ;
They cried—“ La belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall ! ”

‘ I saw their starved lips in the gloam
With horrid warning gapéd wide,

And I awoke and found me here,
On the cold hill's side.

'And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the Lake,
And no birds sing.'

IV

PATRIOTISM

Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
 ‘This is my own, my native land!’
Whose heart hath ne’er within him burn’d,
As home his footsteps he hath turn’d,
 From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonour’d, and unsung!

V

ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind !

Brightest in dungeons, Liberty ! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind ;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon ! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard ! May none those marks efface !
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

VII

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme :
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady ?
What men or gods are these ? What maidens
loth ?
What mad pursuit ? What struggle to escape ?
What pipes and timbrels ? What wild ecstasy ?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter ; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on ;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone :
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not
leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare ;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not
grieve ;

She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !

Ah, happy, happy boughs ! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu ;
And, happy melodist, unwearied
For ever piping songs for ever new ;
More happy love ! more happy, happy love !
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
For ever panting and for ever young ;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice ?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest ?
What little town by river or seashore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn ?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be ; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape ! Fair attitude ! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed ;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity : Cold Pastoral !
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou
say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty',—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

VIII

ON HIS BLINDNESS

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodged with me useless, though my soul
more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide ;
' Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? '
I fondly ask : But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, ' God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best :
his state
Is kingly : thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest ;
They also serve who only stand and wait.'

IX

ON A BAD SINGER

Swans sing before they die—'t were no bad thing
Should certain persons die before they sing.

X

PIPPA'S SONG

The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hill-side's dew-pearled ;
The lark's on the wing ;
The snail's on the thorn ;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world !

XI

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away ;
Down and away below.
Now my brothers call from the bay ;
Now the great winds shorewards blow ;
Now the salt tides seawards flow ;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away.
This way, this way.

Call her once before you go.
Call once yet.
In a voice that she will know :
'Margaret ! Margaret !'
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear :
Children's voices, wild with pain.
Surely she will come again.
Call her once and come away ;
This way, this way.
'Mother dear, we cannot stay.'
The wild white horses foam and fret.
Margaret ! Margaret !

Come, dear children, come away down.
 Call no more.
 One last look at the white-wall'd town,
 And the little grey church on the windy shore.
 Then come down.
 She will not come though you call all day.
 Come away, come away.

Children dear, was it yesterday
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay ?
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far-off sound of a silver bell ?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
 Where the winds are all asleep ;
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam ;
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream ;
 Where the sea-beasts rang'd all round
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground ;
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
 Dry their mail and bask in the brine ;
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye ?
 When did music come this way ?
 Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away ?
 Once she sate with you and me,
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
 And the youngest sate on her knee.
 She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
 When down swung the sound of the far-off bell.
 She sigh'd, she looked up through the clear
 green sea.

She said : ' I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
 In the little grey church on the shore today.
 'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me !
 And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee.'
 I said : ' Go up, dear heart, through the waves ;
 Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind
 sea-caves !'

She smil'd, she went up through the surf in
 the bay.

Children dear, was it yesterday ?

Children dear, were we long alone ?
 The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
 ' Long prayers,' I said, ' in the world they say.
 Come !' I said, and we rose through the surf
 in the bay.
 We went up the beach, by the sandy down

67

Hark, what she sings ; ' O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with
its toy.
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well.
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun.'
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the shuttle falls from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand ;
And over the sand at the sea ;
And her eyes are set in a stare ;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh,
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children.
Come children, come down.
The hoarse wind blows colder ;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber

When gusts shake the door ;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.
We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing, ' Here comes a mortal,
But faithless was she.
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea.'

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow ;
When clear falls the moonlight ;
When spring-tides are low :
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom ;
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom :
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creaks we will hie ;
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town ;

At the church on the hill-side —

And then come back down.

Singing, 'There dwells a lov'd one,

But cruel is she.

She left lonely for ever

The kings of the sea.'

XII

KUBLA KHAN

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree :
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
 Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round :
And here were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree ;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover !
A savage place ! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover !
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil
seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced :
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,

Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail :
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean :
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war !

 The shadow of the dome of pleasure
 Floated midway on the waves ;
 Where was heard the mingled measure
 From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice !

 A damsel with a dulcimer
 In a vision once I saw :
 It was an Abyssinian maid,
 And on her dulcimer she played,
 Singing of Mount Abora.
 Could I revive within me
 Her symphony and song,
 To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome ! those caves of ice !

And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware ! Beware !
His flashing eyes, his floating hair !
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

XIII

THE SOLITARY REAPER

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
O listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings ?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today ?

Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again ?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened, motionless and still ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

XIV

From MORTE D'ARTHUR.

‘The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought
by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy
voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them
friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.’

XV

TO THE MOON

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy ?

XVI

DAFFODILS

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced ; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee :
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company :
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

XVII

From HIAWATHA

‘O my children ! my poor children !
Listen to the words of wisdom,
Listen to the words of warning,
From the lips of the Great Spirit,
From the Master of Life, who made you.

‘I have given you lands to hunt in,
I have given you streams to fish in,
I have given you bear and bison,
I have given you roe and reindeer,
I have given you brant and beaver,
Filled the marshes full of wild-fowl,
Filled the rivers full of fishes ;
Why then are you not contented ?
Why then will you hunt each other ?

‘I am weary of your quarrels,
Weary of your wars and bloodshed,
Weary of your prayers for vengeance,
Of your wranglings and dissensions ;
All your strength is in your union,
All your danger is in discord ;
Therefore be at peace henceforward,
And as brothers live together.

‘ I will send a Prophet to you,
A Deliverer of the nations,
Who shall guide you and shall teach you,
If you listen to his counsels,
You will multiply and prosper ;
If his warnings pass unheeded,
You will fade away and perish !

‘ Bathe now in the stream before you,
Wash the war-paint from your faces,
Wash the blood-stains from your fingers,
Bury your war-clubs and your weapons,
Break the red stone from this quarry,
Mould and make it into Peace-Pipes,
Take the reeds that grow beside you,
Deck them with your brightest feathers,
Smoke the calumet together,
And as brothers live henceforward !’

XVIII

From THE WEST WIND

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is :
What if my leaves are falling like its own !
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou,
Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth !
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind !
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy ! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind ?

XIX

THE GLOVE AND THE LIONS

King Francis was a hearty king, and loved a
royal sport,—
And one day as his lions fought, sat looking on
the court ;
The nobles filled the benches, and the ladies in
their pride,
And 'mongst them sat the Count de Lorge,
with one for whom he sighed.
And truly 'twas a gallant thing to see that
crowning show,
Valour and love, and a king above, and the
royal beasts below.

Ramped and roared the lions, with horrid
laughing jaws ;
They bit, they glared, gave blows like beams,
a wind went with their paws ;
With wallowing might and stifled roar they rolled
on one another,
Till all the pit with sand and mane, was in a
thunderous smother.
The bloody foam above the bars came whisking
through the air ;

Said Francis then, 'Faith, gentlemen, we're better
here than there.'

De Lorge's love o'erheard the king, a beauteous,
lively dame

With smiling lips and sharp bright eyes, which
always seemed the same ;

She thought, the Count my lover, is brave as
brave can be ;

He surely would do wondrous things to show
his love for me ;

King, ladies, lovers, all look on ; the occasion is
divine ;

I'll drop my glove to prove his love ; great glory
will be mine.

She dropped her glove, to prove his love, then
looked at him and smiled ;

He bowed, and in a moment leaped among the
lions wild :

The leap was quick, return was quick, he has
regained his place,

Then threw the glove, but not with love, right
in the lady's face.

'By God !' said Francis, 'rightly done !' and
he rose from where he sat :

'No love,' quoth he, 'but vanity, sets love a task
like that.'

XX

From THE ANCIENT MARINER

I

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful !
And they all dead did lie :
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on ; and so did I.

I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away ;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray ;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat ;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky

Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they ;
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high ;
But oh ! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye !
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

II

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made :
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too :

Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

Oh ! dream of joy ! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see ?
Is this the hill ? Is this the kirk ?
Is this mine own countree ?

We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God !
Or let me sleep alway.

* * * *

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer ;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast :
Dear Lord in Heaven ! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice :
It is the Hermit good !
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.

He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

III

The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred ;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread :
It reached the ship, it split the bay ;
The ship went down like lead.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat,
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl where sank the ship
The boat spun round and round ;
And all was still save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked,
And fell down in a fit ;

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars : the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha ! ha !' quoth he, 'full plain I see
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land !
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man !'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou ?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale ;
And then it left me free.

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns :
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

XXI

DEATH

It is not death, that sometime in a sigh
 This eloquent breath shall take its speechless-
flight ;
 That sometime these bright stars, that now reply
 In sunlight to the sun, shall set in night ;
 That this warm conscious flesh shall perish quite,
 And all life's ruddy springs forget to flow ;
 That thoughts shall cease, and the immortal
spright
 Be lapp'd in alien clay and laid below ;
 It is not death to know this,—but to know
 That pious thoughts, which visit at new graves
 In tender pilgrimage, will cease to go
 So duly and so oft,—and when grass waves
 Over the past-away, there may be then
 No resurrection in the minds of men.

XXII

SONG OF THE LOTOS-EATERS

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from
the blissful skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs
in sleep.

Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness ?
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,

Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
'There is no joy but calm !'
Why should we only toil, the roof and
crown of things ?

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast.

And in a little while our lips are dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will last ?
 All things are taken from us, and become
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil ? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave ?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,
 or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream !
 To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on
 the height ;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
 Eating the Lotos day by day,
 To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;
 To muse and brood and live again in memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy

Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn
 of brass !

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
 And dear the last embraces of our wives
 And their warm tears : but all hath
 suffered change ;
 For surely now our household hearths are cold :
 Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
 And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
 Before them of the ten-years' war in Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle ?
 Let what is broken so remain.
 The Gods are hard to reconcile :
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labour unto agéd breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on
 the pilot-stars.
 But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,

How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing
lowly)

With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine—
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine !
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath
the pine.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with
mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy down the
yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when
the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his
foam-fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an
equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of
mankind,
For they lie beside their nectar, and the
bolts are hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the
clouds are lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with
the gleaming world :
Where they smile in secret, looking over
wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake,
roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in
a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient
tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning though the words
are strong ;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave
the soil.

7 97

The Jackdaw sat on the Cardinal's chair !

Many a monk, and many a friar,

With a great many more of lesser degree,—

And they served the Lord Pimate on bended

Never I ween,

Read of in books, or dreamt of in dreams,

Than the Cardinal Lord Archbishop of Rheims!

Through the motley rout,

That little Jackdaw kept hopping about ;

Like a dog in a fair,

Over comfits and cakes,

And dishes and plates,

Cowl and cope, and rochet and pall,

Mitre and crosier ! he hopp'd upon all !

With saucy air,

He perch'd on the chair
Where, in state, the great Lord Cardinal sat
In the great Lord Cardinal's great red hat ;
 And he peer'd in the face
 Of his Lordship's Grace,
With a satisfied look, as if he would say,
' We two are the greatest folks here today !'
 And the priests, with awe,
 As such freaks they saw,
Said, ' The Devil must be in that little Jackdaw !'

The feast was over, the board was clear'd,
The flaws and the custards had all disappear'd,
And six little singing-boys,—dear little souls !
In nice clean faces, and nice white stoles,
 Came, in order due,
 Two by two,
Marching that grand refectory through !
A nice little boy, held a golden ewer,
Emboss'd and fill'd with water, as pure
As any that flows between Rheims and Namur,
Which a nice little boy stood ready to catch
In a fine golden hand-basin made to match.
Two nice little boys, rather more grown,
Carried Lavender-water and eau de Cologne ;
And a nice little boy had a nice cake of soap,

Worthy of washing the hands of the Pope.
One little boy more
A napkin bore,
Of the best white diaper, fringed with pink,
And a Cardinal's Hat mark'd in 'permanent ink'.

The great Lord Cardinal turns at the sight
Of these nice little boys dressed all in white :
From his finger he draws
His costly turquoise ;
And, not thinking at all about little Jackdaws,
Deposits it straight
By the side of his plate,
While the nice little boys on His Eminence wait ;
Till, when nobody's dreaming of any such thing,
That little Jackdaw hops off with the ring !
There's a cry and a shout,
And a deuce of a rout,
And nobody seems to know what they're about,
But the monks have their pockets all turn'd
inside out.

The friars are kneeling,
And hunting, and feeling
The carpet, the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling.
The Cardinal drew
Off each plum-colour'd shoe,
And left his red stockings exposed to the view ;

He peeps, and he feels
In the toes and the heels ;
They turn up the dishes,—they turn up the
plates,—
They take up the poker and poke out the grates,
—They turn up the rugs,
They examine the mugs :—
But, no !—no such thing ;—
They can't find THE RING !
And the Abbot declared that, ' When nobody
twigg'd it,
Some rascal or other had popp'd in,
and prigg'd it ! '

The Cardinal rose with a dignified look,
He called for his candle, his bell, and his book !
In holy anger, and pious grief,
He solemnly cursed that rascally thief !
He cursed him at board, he cursed him
in bed ;
From the sole of his foot to the crown
of his head ;
He cursed him in sleeping, that every night
He should dream of the devil, and wake
in a fright ;
He cursed him in eating, he cursed him
in drinking,

The day was gone,
The night came on,
The Monks and the Friars they search'd till dawn ;
When the Sacristan saw,
On crumpled claw,
Come limping a poor little lame Jackdaw !
No longer gay,
As on yesterday ;
His feathers all seem'd to be turn'd the wrong
way ; —
His pinions droop'd—he could hardly stand,—
His head was as bald as the palm of your hand ;
His eye so dim,
So wasted each limb,

That, heedless of grammar, they all cried,
‘ THAT’S HIM ! —
 That’s the scamp that has done this scandalous
thing !
 That’s the thief that has got my Lord Cardinal’s
Ring ! ’

The poor little Jackdaw,
When the monks he saw,
Feebly gave vent to the ghost of a caw ;
And turn'd his bald head, as much as to say,
' Pray be so good as to walk this way ! '

Slower and slower
He limp'd on before,
Till they came to the back of the belfry door,
Where the first thing they saw,
'Midst the sticks and the straw,
Was the RING in the nest of that little Jackdaw !

Then the great Lord Cardinal called for his book,
And off that terrible curse he took ;
 The mute expression
 Served in lieu of confession,
And, being thus coupled with full restitution,
The Jackdaw got plenary absolution !
 —When those words were heard,

That poor little bird
Was so changed in a moment, 'twas really absurd.
He grew sleek, and fat ;
In addition to that,
A fresh crop of feathers came thick as a mat !
His tail wagged more
Even than before ;
But no longer it wagged with an impudent air,
No longer he perch'd on the Cardinal's chair.
He hopp'd now about
With a gait devout ;
At Matins, at Vespers, he never was out ;
And, so far from any more pilfering deeds,
He always seem'd telling the Confessor's beads.
If anyone lied,—or if any one swore,—
Or slumber'd in prayer-time and happen'd
to snore,

That good Jackdaw
Would give a great 'Caw',
As much as to say, 'Don't do so any more !'
While many remark'd, as his manners they saw,
That they 'never had known such a pious
Jackdaw !'

He long lived the pride
Of that country-side,
And at last in the odour of sanctity died ;

When, as words were too faint
His merits to paint,
The conclave determined to make him a Saint ;
And on newly-made Saints and Popes, as you
know,
It's the custom, at Rome, new names to bestow,
So they canonized him by the name of JIM CROW !

PART IV

FROM THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

I

From HAMLET

Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar ;
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel ;
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment
Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware
Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear't that th' opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice :
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy
judgement.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy :
For the apparel oft proclaims the man,
And they in France of the best rank and station
Are most select and generous, chief in that.
Neither a borrower, nor a lender be ;
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.
This above all : to thine own self be true ;
And it must follow, as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

II

From HENRY IV

O sleep ! O gentle sleep !
 Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,
 That thou no more wilt weigh my eyelids down,
 And steep my senses in forgetfulness ?
 Why, rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs,
 Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
 And hush'd with buzzing night-flies to thy
slumber,
 Than in the perfum'd chambers of the great,
 Under the canopies of costly state,
 And lull'd with sound of sweetest melody ?
 O thou dull god ! why liest thou with the vile
 In loathsome beds, and leav'st the kingly couch
 A watch-case or a common 'larum bell ?
 Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
 Seel up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
 In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
 And in the visitation of the winds,
 Who take the ruffian billows by the top,
 Curling their monstrous heads, and hanging them
 With deaf'ning clamour in the slippery clouds,
 That, with the hurly death itself awakes ?
 Canst thou, O partial sleep ! give thy repose

To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude ;
And in the calmest and most stillest night,
With all appliances and means to boot,
Deny it to a king ? Then, happy low, lie down !
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.

III

From AS YOU LIKE IT

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players ;
They have their exits and their entrances ;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel,
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the justice,
In fair round belly with good capon lin'd,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances ;
And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
With spectacles on nose and pouch on side ;
His youthful hose well sav'd, a world too wide
For his shrunk shank ; and his big manly voice,

Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness and mere oblivion ;
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

IV

From JULIUS CÆSAR

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears ;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interred with their bones :
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious ;
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,—
For Brutus is an honourable man ;
So are they all, all honourable men,—
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me :
But Brutus says he was ambitious ;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious ?
When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept :
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff ;
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious ;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal

I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse : was this ambition ?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious ;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause :
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him ?
O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me ;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

PART V

MODERN ENGLISH POEMS

A RAJPUT NURSE

And because she was young, and comely, and of
good repute, and had laid
A babe in the arms of her husband, the Palace-
Nurse she was made :

‘ For the sweet chief-queen of the Rana in
Joudhpore city had died,
Leaving a motherless infant, the heir of that race
of pride ;
The heir of the peacock-banner, of the five-
coloured flag, of the throne,
Which traces its record of glory from days when
it ruled alone ;

‘ From times when, forth from the sunlight, the
first of our kings came down
And had the earth for his footstool, and wore the
stars for his crown,
As all good Rajputs have told us ; so Moti was
proud and true,
With the Prince of the land on her bosom, and
her own brown baby too.

‘ And the Rajput women will have it (I know not
myself of these things)
As the two babes lay on her lap there, her lord’s
and the Joudhpore king’s ;

‘For treason was wild in the country, and
villainous men had sought
The life of the heir of the *gadi*, to the Palace in
secret brought ;
With bribes to the base, and with knife-thrusts
for the faithful, they made their way
Through the line of the guards, and the gateways,
to the hall where the women lay.

121

‘A breathless watcher, who whispered with
horror in eyes and face :
“Oh, Moti, men come to murder my lord the
Prince in this place !
They have bought the help of the gate-guards, or
slaughtered them unawares,
Hark ! that is the noise of their tulwars, the
clatter upon the stairs !”

‘ For one breath she caught her baby from her lap
to her heart, and let
The king’s child sink from her nipple, with lips
still clinging and wet,
Then tore from the Prince his head-cloth, and
the putta of pearls from his waist,
And bound the belt on her infant, and the cap
on his brows, in haste.

' And laid her own dear offspring, her flesh and
blood, on the floor,
With the girdle of pearls around him, and the cap
that the king's son wore ;

‘ But there (so they deemed) in his jewels lay the
Chota Rana, the Heir ;
“ The cow with two calves has escaped us,” cried
one ; “ it is right and fair,
She should save her own butcha ; no matter ! the
edge of the dagger ends
This spark of Lord Raghoba’s sunlight ; stab
thrice and four times, O friends ! ”

‘ And the Rajput women will have it (I know not
if this can be so)
That Moti’s son in the putta and golden cap cooed
low,
When the sharp blades met in his small heart,
with never one moan or wince,
But died with a babe’s light laughter, because
he died for his Prince.

‘ Thereby did the Rajput mother preserve the line
of our kings.’
‘ Oh ! Vittoo,’ I said, ‘ but they gave her much gold
and beautiful things,

And garments, and land for her people, and a
home in the Palace ! May be
She had grown to love that Princeling even more
than the child on her knee.'

'May it please the Presence,' quoth Vittoo, 'it
seemeth not so. They gave
The gold and the garment and jewels, as much as
the proudest would have ;
But the same night deep in her true heart she
buried a knife and smiled,
Saying this : " I have saved my Rana, I must go
to suckle my child ! " '

II

THE DONKEY

When fishes flew and forests walked
And figs grew upon thorn,
Some moment when the moon was blood
Then surely I was born ;

With monstrous head and sickening cry
And ears like errant wings,
The devil's walking parody
On all four-footed things.

The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will,
Starve, scourge, deride me : I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

Fools ! For I also had my hour ;
One far fierce hour and sweet :
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet.

III

From THE GREAT LOVER

These I have loved :

White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines ; and feathery, faery dust ;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light ; the strong crust
Of friendly bread ; and many-tasting food ;
Rainbows ; and the blue bitter smoke of wood ;
And radiant rain-drops couching in cool flowers ;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny
hours,

Dreaming of moths that drink them under the
moon ;

Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble ; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets ; grainy wood ; live hair that is
Shining and free ; blue-massing clouds ; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine ;

The benison of hot water ; furs to touch ;
The good smell of old clothes ; and other such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns . . .

Dear names,
And thousand other throng to me ! Royal flames ;

Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring ;
Holes in the ground ; and voices that do sing ;
Voices in laughter, too ; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace ; and the deep panting train ;
Firm sands ; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home ;
And washen stones, gay for an hour ; the cold
Graveness of iron ; moist black earthen mould ;
Sleep ; and high places ; footprints in the dew ;
And oaks ; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy new ;
And new-peeled sticks ; and shining pools on
grass ;—

All these have been my loves. And these shall pass,
Whatever passes not, in the great hour,
Nor all my passion, all my prayers, have power
To hold them with me through the gate of Death.
They'll play deserter, turn with the traitor breath
Break the high bond we made, and sell Love's trust
And sacramented covenant to the dust.
—Oh, never a doubt, but, somewhere, I shall wake,
And give what's left of love again, and make
New friends, now strangers . . .

But the best I've known,
Stays here, and changes, breaks, grows old, is blown
About the winds of the world, and fades from
brains

Of living men, and dies.

Nothing remains.

O dear my loves, O faithless, once again

This one last gift I give : that after men

Shall know, and later lovers, far removed,

Praise you, 'All these were lovely' ; say, 'He
loved.'

IV

HE FELL AMONG THIEVES

‘Ye have robbed,’ said he, ‘ye have slaughtered
and made an end,
Take your ill-got plunder, and bury the dead :
What will ye more of your guest and sometime
friend ? ’

‘Blood for our blood,’ they said.

He laughed : ‘If one may settle the score for five,
I am ready ; but let the reckoning stand till
day :

I have loved the sunlight as dearly as any alive.’

‘You shall die at dawn,’ said they.

He flung his empty revolver down the slope,
He climbed alone to the Eastward edge of
the trees ;

All night long in a dream untroubled of hope
He brooded, clasping his knees.

He did not hear the monotonous roar that fills
The ravine where the Yassin river sullenly
flows ;

He did not see the starlight on the Laspur hills,
Or the far Afghan snows.

He saw the April noon on his books aglow,
The wistaria trailing in at the window wide ;
He heard his father's voice from the terrace below
Calling him down to ride.

He saw the grey little church across the park.
The mounds that hide the loved and honoured
dead ;

The Norman arch, the chancel softly dark,
The brasses black and red.

He saw the School Close, sunny and green,
The runner beside him, the stand by the
parapet wall,
The distant tape, and the crowd roaring between
His own name over all.

He saw the dark wainscot and timbered roof,
The long tables, and the faces merry and keen ;
The College Eight and their trainer dining aloof,
The Dons on the daïs serene.

He watched the liner's stem ploughing the foam,
He felt her trembling speed and the thrash of
her screw ;

He heard the passengers' voices talking of home,
He saw the flag she flew.

And now it was dawn. He rose strong on his feet,
And strode to his ruined camp below the
wood ;
He drank the breath of the morning cool and
sweet ;
His murderers round him stood.

Light on the Laspur hills was broadening fast,
The blood-red snowpeaks chilled to a dazzling
white :
He turned, and saw the golden circle at last,
Cut by the Eastern height.

' O glorious Life, who dwellest in earth and sun,
I have lived, I praise and adore thee.' A sword
swept.

Over the pass the voices one by one
Faded, and the hill slept.

V

THE LAKE ISLE OF INNISFREE

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
made ;
Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the
honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes
dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where
the cricket sings ;
There midnight's all a-glimmer, and noon a purple
glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the
shore ;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements
grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

VI

THE LISTENERS

‘Is there anybody there?’ said the Traveller,
Knocking on the moonlit door;
And his horse in the silence champed the grasses
Of the forest’s ferny floor;
And a bird flew up out of the turret,
Above the Traveller’s head:
And he smote upon the door again a second time;
‘Is there anybody there?’ he said.
But no one descended to the Traveller;
No head from the leaf-fringed sill
Leaned over and looked into his grey eyes,
Where he stood perplexed and still.
But only a host of phantom listeners
That dwelt in the lone house then
Stood listening in the quiet of the moonlight
To that voice from the world of men:
Stood thronging the faint moonbeams on the
dark stair,
That goes down to the empty hall,
Harkening in an air stirred and shaken
By the lonely Traveller’s call.
And he felt in his heart their strangeness,
Their stillness answering his cry,

While his horse moved, cropping the dark turf,
 'Neath the starred and leafy sky ;
For he suddenly smote on the door, even
 Louder, and lifted his head :—
'Tell them I came and no one answered,
 That I kept my word,' he said.
Never the least stir made the listeners,
 Though every word he spake
Fell echoing through the shadowiness of the
 still house
From the one man left awake :
Ay, they heard his foot upon the stirrup,
 And the sound of iron on stone,
And how the silence surged softly backward,
 When the plunging hoofs were gone.

VII

STUPIDITY STREET

I saw with open eyes
Singing birds sweet
Sold in the shops
For the people to eat,
Sold in the shops of
Stupidity street.

I saw in vision
The worm in the wheat,
And in the shops nothing
For people to eat ;
Nothing for sale in
Stupidity street.

VIII

LEISURE

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare ?

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

IX

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you ;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too ;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.

If you can dream—and not make dreams your
master ;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your
aim ;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same ;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools.

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss ;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them : ' Hold on ! '

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count on you but none too much ;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son !

X

UNCONQUERABLE

Out of the night that covers me,
 Black as the pit from pole to pole.
I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
 I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
 Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate :
 I am the captain of my soul.

XI

THE BELLS OF HEAVEN

'Twould ring the bells of Heaven
The wildest peal for years,
If Parson lost his senses
And people came to theirs,
And he and they together
Knelt down with angry prayers
For tamed and shabby tigers,
And dancing dogs and bears,
And wretched, blind pit ponies,
And little hunted hares.

XII

THE TORCH OF LIFE

There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote—
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

The sand of the desert is sodden red,
Red with the wreck of a square that broke ;—
The Gatling's jammed and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks :
'Play up! play up! and play the game!'

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.

This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in a flame,
And falling, fling to the host behind—
‘Play up, play up ! and play the game !’

XIII

SEA-FEVER

I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea
and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the
white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey
dawn breaking.

I must down to the seas again, for the call of the
running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be
denied ;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white
clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and
the sea-gulls crying.

I must down to the seas again, to the vagrant
gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the
wind's like a whetted knife ;

And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing
fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long
trick's over.

XIV

O CAPTAIN! MY CAPTAIN!

O Captain ! my Captain ! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we
sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all
exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim
and daring ;

But O heart ! heart ! heart !

O the bleeding drops of red !

Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the
bells;

Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the
bugle trills,

For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you
the shores a-crowding,

For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager
faces turning ;

Here, Captain ! dear father !

This arm beneath your head !

It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale
and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse
nor will ;
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage
closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with
object won ;
Exult, O shores ! and ring, O bells !
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

NOTES ON THE POETS

I

Matthew Arnold, born in 1822, was the son of the principal of a famous school. He won a scholarship to Oxford University where he made many friends. People liked his company because he had such amusing ways, strange clothes, airs and graces of all sorts, and was a clever, witty talker. Nevertheless, he found life a serious business and many of his poems are rather mournful and gloomy. He became a school inspector as he wanted money to marry quickly. He said it was a 'dog's life',—school inspecting, not marriage. Later he became a Professor of Poetry at Oxford and a writer on religion and politics. Many people felt angry at his ideas. He always loved travelling and died at the age of sixty-six. He had rather a sad face.

II

Sir Edwin Arnold was once the principal of the Sanskrit College in Poona. While in India he studied Oriental literature and became fascinated with Indian legends and tales. When he went back to England he became a journalist and worked for a newspaper office for over forty years. During this time he produced the great epic *The Light of Asia* dealing with the life of the Buddha. It was a great success and the knowledge that most western people have of Buddhism is the result of the popularity of this long poem. Although he left India he ever thought of the land that had once fascinated

him. In a book called *Indian Idylls* he wrote beautiful poems based on the stories he had heard in India. Sir Edwin Arnold later lived in Japan, and the last of his wives—he had three—was a Japanese woman. His heart was always in the East. Buddhists all over the world remember him as a great friend of the religion of the Buddha.

III

Robert Barham has written some exciting ghost stories as well as humorous poems. Perhaps he found material for his ghost tales in the weird old manor house in which he lived as a child. He met with a nasty accident when a little boy and would have died except for the tender care of an old lady who was devoted to him. In school, like all boys with a clever sense of fun and wit, he was always popular. At first he wanted to become a lawyer, but the tragic suicide of a friend made him decide to be a priest. As you will guess from his poetry, he wasn't an ordinary serious sort of priest—he even saw a humorous side to the ceremony of the church. He believed in doing good rather than preaching to others to do it. He was always cheerful and became happy by making others so. He died in 1845.

IV

Rupert Brooke, perhaps the handsomest English poet of modern times, died very young during the War while on active service in the British Navy. He was

the son of a schoolmaster and was a familiar figure at the famous English public school, Rugby. He is the Great Friend in literature. To him the laughter and love of friends were the greatest pleasures in life. No man had so many friends, each one of whom he sincerely loved. He used to repeat a long list of their names every night before he went to sleep. Not only was he a great poet but also a very interesting letter-writer who wrote to his friends with the wholeheartedness of an artist. He was a great traveller too. Only one of his books of poetry had been published when he died. But that one slender volume created a great deal of criticism. Yet he did not mind it for he said he wrote 'to save his soul'. Although another collection was printed after his death, not all that he produced has been published. For the Great Friend who died young and beautiful burnt most of what he wrote.

V

Robert Browning who was born in 1812, did not have such an exciting life as most poets. Nevertheless, his runaway marriage with the poetess Elizabeth Barrett, against her stern father's will, was sensational enough.

They lived for a long time in Italy writing lots of poems and plays and were always very much in love with each other. Unfortunately Elizabeth Barrett Browning was an invalid.

Browning lived until he was seventy-seven and although his works were not very popular at first, he was famous when he died.

VI

In January 1788 the poet Byron was born of not very happy parents. He appears to have been rather a conceited young man on account of his good looks, although at times a slight lameness in his foot gave him a sense of inferiority. Like most poets he did nothing remarkable at school except as a leader in frolic and fight. He fell in love early in life, but his love was not returned and he became bitter in spirit. Nevertheless he recovered, and a few more adventures in that field were encountered. At the death of his grand-uncle he became more conceited than ever as he was made Lord Byron. But that did not stop him from writing poetry. You must read *The Prisoner of Chillon* to which the sonnet here is only an introduction, if you wish to feel his passion for liberty.

He died in 1822 far away in Greece whither he had gone to fight for Greek Independence. There is a street in Athens bearing Byron's name.

VII

When a small boy only ten years of age, Harindranath Chattopadhyaya saw his first play acted before a crowded audience. Even earlier he had written poems and verses which had caused a considerable amount of comment.

He was the seventh and most brilliant child of a talented family of eight. He was very careful in the

choice of his parents, for his father was a learned Brahmin full of mystic dreams and his mother a fine character in her gentle quiet way.

Chattopadhyaya is the sort of poet who gets a sudden inspiration and sits down until it is spent and a whole book of verse or an entire play is written.

He has travelled widely in the United States, England and Russia and has worked hard to improve the Indian Theatre.

He has one son, still quite a little boy, who is an extremely promising child.

VIII

Gilbert Keith Chesterton was an extremely fat man, and like all fat men he was full of fun. He makes you laugh about all sorts of things—it really does not matter what. Once he published a long, long essay on a bit of coloured chalk. He liked a sense of space about him and lived in a huge room a hundred feet long with a stage at the end of it. First he wanted to be a painter but found writing was easier. He usually wore a huge black hat and a black cloak and his hair was very untidy. He wrote poetry very rarely. Most of the time he was busy quarrelling with somebody or other (in words of course) or writing detective novels, literary essays, or articles for papers. Sometimes he shows you truth upside down. It looks very witty and interesting; we call it a paradox. He was famous for such things.

He died in 1936.

IX

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was born in 1772, sometimes did quite strange things. When quite young he won a scholarship to Cambridge for three years. After two were finished, however, he slipped quietly away, and no one knew where he was. He first loafed about London and then finally joined the army as an ordinary soldier. But he could not keep up the pretence for long. One day, on hearing two Officers arguing about literature, he could not resist making a clever remark. The officers were so astonished that they worried Coleridge until he told them his story. They wrote to his friends, and he left the army.

Unfortunately Coleridge's health broke down, and to relieve his constant pain he started taking opium. Some people believe that many of his poems, including *Kubla Khan*, were written in an opium dream. He wrote weird poems about mysterious beings of other worlds influencing people in this.

He knew Keats and Lamb and was a great friend of Wordsworth and Southey. They all used to tease him because he talked so much.

He died in 1834.

X

E. Helen d'Alwis is a young lady who came into this world twenty odd years ago and has been laughing ever since. She spends most of her time laughing at and

with her class in a girls' school in Ceylon. Her pupils look upon her as a friend and say she is quite the jolliest, wittiest teacher they have ever had.

Nevertheless her poems are always serious, even melancholy at times. Many of them have appeared in print both in England and India as well as in Ceylon.

XI

William Henry Davies, until he became a recognized poet, was a vagabond all his life. As a small boy he could not stand school for more than a few years. The young scamp found organizing a robber-gang better fun and more exciting. Caught red-handed stealing from merchants of his own town in Wales, he was expelled from school. That did not upset him a bit. He managed to get to America where he scoured the country as a professional beggar and tramp. Once, while stealing a free ride on a train in Canada, he slipped under the wheels and had his right foot cut off at the ankle. Coming back to England the one-legged young man wrote poems about his terrible life and hawked them for a living. George Bernard Shaw, the writer of witty plays, on being forced to buy one, made the young man famous by declaring him to be a real poet. Now he is a very respectable old poet of sixty-four, incessantly smoking a pipe, honoured by the University of Wales with a high-sounding degree.

XII

Walter John de la Mare became a clerk in a London oil company at the age of seventeen, straight from school. Although the figures he used to add up often became fantastic knights of old and the entries became adventurous episodes of romance, he stuck to his job for eighteen years. The matter-of-fact life he led made the love of imaginative beauty more urgent and he thought himself a poet and dressed as poets do in Paris, dishevelled his dark abundant hair. Even while a clerk he was an editor-publisher who wrote nearly all the contents of the two issues of the company's magazine. Later de la Mare found he *was* a poet. He wrote poetry mostly for children which the grown-ups liked more than they. He was a great dreamer and made out of absolutely imaginary experiences poems full of romance and fantasy. When he was given a good pension by the Government he established himself as a real working poet and devoted himself entirely to the writing of strange and fantastic things which always were beautiful. He is now sixty-four.

XIII

William Ernest Henley was a sad sort of poet. Although he was always full of courage and resolutely struggled against odds, his life was never an easy one. When quite young it was found that he had symptoms of tuberculosis. One of his legs was amputated and for

a long time he was in danger of losing the other. When he was in hospital in Edinburgh he met R. L. Stevenson and the two became great friends. As a poet Henley did not pay much heed to the music of his lines, but a few of his pieces have secured him immortality for their strength and vigour. He had a rather violent temper but we must forgive him this as he had to fight against death all his life. He finally gave up the struggle in 1903.

XIV

Ralph Hodgson, born in 1871, is, as you can guess from his poems, a great lover of animals. Unlike many of their so-called lovers he does not believe in expressing his affection for them by making them his pets. He is rather a champion of their freedom. He thinks that most human beings are very stupid and ignorant in their attitude to them.

He writes in a very simple way and his poems are full of fine feeling and thoughts.

XV

Thomas Hood, familiarly known as Tom Hood, was born as far back as 1799. He refused to take life seriously because he thought it was not worth the bother. So he laughed as long as he lived—but he did not live long. Very early in life he knew that he was sickening for consumption. He was taken out of school and was allowed to run wild for three years. He then began to

study in order to become an engraver but the kind of life did not appeal to him. He turned his thoughts to journalism, and his keen unerring sense of humour made him a success. It was, as he himself said, his misfortune to be 'a lively Hood for a livelihood'. His humour did not leave him even on his deathbed, for he was continuing a jest when he was dying on 3 May 1845.

XVI

Leigh Hunt was a fat jovial man with a kindly nature and a strong sense of friendship. His little house in Hampstead was the meeting-place of many poets and artists of the day including Byron, Shelley and Keats. He was a particularly warm friend of young Keats to whom he gave much encouragement.

His own poems are simple and cheerful—just like Hunt himself. He was a critic and an essayist and was interested in politics too. He and his brother were clever journalists and edited a very outspoken paper. In fact they were both fined and imprisoned for publishing an uncomplimentary description of a prince. Hunt seems, however, to have had quite a comfortable two years in gaol where he papered his room with roses, decorated it with flowers, procured a good library and a piano!

During his imprisonment he wrote numerous poems and essays and continued to edit his paper.

XVII

We cannot be very sure of the details of Kalidasa's life. Yet we know him to have been one of the greatest of poets of the ancient East. We believe he lived in the fifth century, that he was extremely handsome, that his parents were Brahmins and his wife a princess of Benares.

Legend tells that he met with a tragic death in Ceylon. Kumaradasa, King of Lanka, was very proud of some lines of Sanskrit verse which he had composed and written on a wall. He challenged any one to complete them. Kalidasa, who was in Ceylon on a visit to the scholar king, took up the challenge and completed the verse. The same night he was murdered by the lady of the house who designed to take the credit for his composition.

Most of Kalidasa's poems were on love but the one you read here is about nature.

XVIII

John Keats was born in 1795. As a school boy he was a jolly, popular lad with a quick temper, which often led him to fight with his companions. It was only at fourteen that he became interested in books, and then he just read and read and read—even at meal-times. Owing to his father's death he had early to think of earning his living and so became apprenticed to a surgeon. He was never really interested in cutting and

stitching up people, for poetry filled his mind. Sometimes he marvelled that his patients did not die during the operation, so far away were his thoughts from the knife. This led him to break away and devote himself entirely to literature at the age of about twenty. Already his compositions, inspired as they were by the early Greek poets, had won much admiration. He had friends, including Leigh Hunt, who encouraged him in his writing. He knew Wordsworth and Shelley; you will find poems of theirs in this book too.

Keats was a very handsome young man with delicate features, sensitive eyes, and a face full of gentleness. Unfortunately his health was poor and he died a sad, lonely death, before he reached his twenty-sixth birthday. He died in Italy. He had gone to Italy for his health and he was very unhappy because he loved a young lady who did not return his affection as ardently as he wished.

XIX

Rudyard Kipling who died in 1936 was born in Bombay where his father was the Director of the Art School. When very young he learnt Indian languages and lore from his *ayahs* until he went to England for his education. On finishing school he decided not to go to the university. He preferred to return to India—this time to Lahore where his father was the Director of the Museum. Here he joined a newspaper. It was as a journalist that he wrote most of his poems which made

him famous when published in England. What the English soldier felt in India, what the European official thought out here in the East, he expressed in a new way to the West. He always wrote stories and tales about Indians whom he never understood. He, of course, glorified the British Empire. He married an American and made a desperate attempt at settling down in the United States. On his return to England he lived in semi-seclusion, honoured with a long list of degrees given by numerous universities. You will like his *Just-so Stories*, *Kim* and *The Jungle Books*.

XX

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in 1807 at Portland in America. He was rather a serious-minded lad for a poet. His father was a great and learned lawyer, and Henry's ambition was to follow in his father's footsteps. He began to study law but was offered the chance of the chair of modern languages at a university, and he travelled in Europe to fit himself for this post. He brought back to the new world some of the culture of the old. As a professor he was very enthusiastic and very clever. But he did not like to be tied to the chair, so he grumbled for eighteen years (at the same time doing his work efficiently) and then resigned, and found time for his literary hobbies. He died when he was 75 years old.

XXI

John Masefield when young, like most orphans, was a great nuisance to his aunt who brought him up. He loved to roam about the woods, searching for excitement and looking for trouble. Most of all he liked the sea. So, at fourteen years of age, he became an apprentice on a ship and travelled all over the world for three years. Leaving the ship in New York, he knocked about America, earning his living as a baker's boy, stable-hand and other odd-job men. Later while working at a bookshop he began to read the classic English authors; he found he liked literature and on arrival in England after six years vagabondage became a friend of the Irish poets Synge and Yeats. He was in his element and wrote very beautiful poems about the sea. Now he is the Poet Laureate who composes poems on great occasions. He is a shy man with a surprised and inquisitive look.

XXII

Milton was born on 9 December 1608 being the third of six children. Milton 'senior' was supposed to be an accomplished musician and a composer. His music seems to have died with him, except of course, what still abounds in the poetry of his son John. Painters imagine the poet to have been very beautiful as a child and in his youth he was well known for his upright character. Like most boys of his time he was

not in love with school-life, but before he left university he had proved himself to be a poet. However, he was not writing poetry all the time. For twenty years he was fighting for the people's rights in the political struggles of England, suffering his soul to lie mute and lonely in the temple of the Muses. Two of his three marriages proved to be unhappy and school boys make a joke of this fact by saying that he wrote *Paradise Lost* when he married and *Paradise Regained* when his wife died. As you know he became blind in later life by using his eyes too much in his work, and his blindness seems to have driven him to search the mysteries of a world removed from ours.

Many people think him second only to Shakespeare in the list of poets.

XXIII

Sarojini Naidu, born in 1879, is one of the most famous daughters of modern India. She is known not only as a poetess but as a most fiery orator capable of stirring thousands of people to action for their country's sake. Along with Mahatma Gandhi she has spent years in prison for defying the British Raj. She is often spoken of as the singing-bird of India, and in whatever country she travels, pressmen photograph her and wait hours for interviews. Wherever she goes, large audiences gather to hear her eloquent words. She is the sister of Harindranath Chattopadhyaya. People who have seen her never forget her gorgeous *saris* and the flowers in her hair.

XXIV

Sir Henry John Newbolt, in addition to being a poet, is an important man who, during the Great War, managed the operations of Britain's wireless and cables. He liked the sea and writing about it, and, as in Masfield's, you feel the roll of the ocean wave, in most of Sir Henry Newbolt's poetry. He has also written big books of history and he was once a lawyer.

XXV

Sir Walter Scott, born in 1771, was descended from a long line of Scottish families. His ambition was to become a soldier but a slight lameness made him a weakling. As a child, living on his grandfather's farm, he listened eagerly to border ballads and border stories, and long before he went to school his mind was well-stocked with the folk lore and traditions of 'Caledonia, stern and wild'. The atmosphere of his father's house was not very congenial to this young and ardent collector of romances, but he spent all his holidays scouring the countryside searching for local legends. When he was nineteen he fell in love, but the young lady married somebody else. She is immortalized in many of his compositions. His poetry is not great, considered as poetry, as you do not find deep meditation or rapt enthusiasm in it, but when you read his works you will get a breath from 'the land of brown heath and shaggy

wood' full of mountains and falling water. Scott died in 1832.

XXVI

William Shakespeare was born of not very clever but fairly well-to-do parents in 1564.

As a boy young William must have been the despair of his teachers. He must have been the sort of boy who always lost his book or forgot to do his homework. At any rate we know for a fact that he sometimes forgot to go to school at all! Instead he wandered through the woods and meadows making friends with tree and flower. At times he made the acquaintance of rabbits and deer in other people's parks and was marched off to the courts for explanation.

When only 18 he married, but later ran away from his wife, a lady much older than himself, leaving her with a small family to bring up. Naturally he went to London. There he seems to have liked plays and acting so much that when he could not get *inside* a theatre he used to stay *outside* looking after horses which had brought luckier people along. After a while he managed to find employment inside the theatre, became an actor, 'touched up' the plays of others, and finally wrote his own. He never became very famous in his own day but by the time he died at the age of 54, he had written dozens of plays, sonnets and songs which still thrill and amaze people all over the world. Many people think he is the greatest of all writers.

XXVII

Percy Bysshe Shelley, son of a rich Sussex landowner, was born in 1792. He was an exceptionally beautiful boy with sparkling blue eyes, dark hair that fell in curls, and a soft complexion like a girl's. When first he appeared in school the bullies thought he would make a fine victim, but they were soon to learn that this slender fellow had an unbreakable will, and eyes which though tranquil at peace could become wild with indignation when aroused to defend himself. He did not like games and preferred to wander away by himself through the meadows that border the river Thames. He would fling his long, lithe body on the dancing grass and listen to the music of the river which had the power of changing misery into melancholy, and then the peace of forgetfulness would steal over him. As he grew older he saw the ridiculousness of life—its meanness and its injustice,—and he sought, through his poetry, to change the order of things.

XXVIII

Rabindranath Tagore, the most famous poet of Asia, comes from an ancient Bengali family of deeply religious people. Although he is the presiding *guru* of Santiniketan, the international school of Bolpur, he himself hated the very idea of school as a boy. Educated privately, he learnt his English painstakingly and reluctantly. At seventeen he thought of becoming a

lawyer and accordingly went to England for study. It did not take him long to realize what a very poor lawyer he would have become. On his return he took charge of his father's estates. Far more important is that he wrote some exquisite love poetry in the heart of beautiful Bengal. He always wrote in Bengali and the poems we read in English are all translations. He became known as the Bengal Shelley. W. B. Yeats introduced Tagore to the West when his first book *Gitanjali* was published. He became world famous and was awarded the greatest honour in literature, the Nobel Prize, in 1913. He has travelled all over the world and is a great singer, actor, and painter.

His appearance is as grand as his thoughts. His eyes are the dreamy far-seeing eyes of the poet and philosopher. His silver beard and gently curling hair, his strong clear-cut features and kingly stature make him the romantic figure of our dreams.

He loves young people and is never happier than when surrounded by the boys and girls of his much cherished school.

XXIX

For an Englishman Tennyson's appearance was unusual. He was dark and swarthy in complexion and long of limb. He was often stared at by people and no doubt became sensitive about it. As a boy he was teased and bullied by his schoolfellows. He hated school; even his school teacher had once banged him on

the head with a book ! He longed for his gentle mother, his own little room and quiet hours with his books. He hated games and preferred to wander alone in the countryside, chatting with common folk by the wayside and shouting aloud his own poems to the wind and the air and the darkness of the night. He and his brother used to spend hours tucked away in an attic reading their own poems, offering mutual approval and encouragement. Tennyson wrote his first poems when he was eight and his first published poems were written when he was between 15 and 17 years. He wrote about trees at night and gloom and darkness and the moon. In the end he became Lord Tennyson and Poet Laureate of England. He was born in 1809 and died in 1892.

XXX

Walt Whitman was born in America in 1819. His life was always a roaming one like that of a gypsy. He began as an errand-boy, then he was a printer and then a school-teacher. Later on he discovered that the atmosphere of the school was too cramped, so he made his escape and became a carpenter. When he was tired of fashioning things out of wood, he began building houses for other people to live in. Not satisfied with building, he tried selling. I do not think he made much profit, so he turned to journalism, and did not change his mind any more. Of course, between his varied occupations there were long spells of loafing during which he studied his fellow-men and meditated. He discovered that life was full of little ironies, for

though he wrote his rough, unpolished poetry for the common people, they disowned him. Cultured people say that his poems are interesting to read, for he has infused into them his true and manly spirit. He lived for 73 years.

XXXI

When quite a small boy, William Wordsworth attempted to commit suicide. His mother died in 1778 when he was eight, and his grandparents made him very miserable. Nevertheless in some ways Wordsworth's childhood was a happy one.

Unlike many other little boys and girls of his day, he was not doomed to live in dull, smoky towns, but in the glorious lake country of England. No wonder he wrote such poetry! Most of his poems were nature poems for his heart was filled with the story of the silent hills and woodlands.

Wordsworth was what we call a great lover of humanity. He saw clearly how the suffering and wretchedness in the world are so often not people's own fault.

His greatest friends were his sister Dorothy and the poet Coleridge. He lived to be eighty and was Poet Laureate when he died in 1850.

XXXII

William Butler Yeats (pronounced Yates), the great Irish poet, as a gentle, dreamy youth used to keep

his father awake in the small hours of the morning reciting poems. First he aspired to be an artist like his father, but even more he liked reading Irish folk-tales, old poems and fairy stories, and writing poetry, which came naturally to him. Today he is an absent-minded old gentleman of seventy-one living with his wife and two children in a lonely, ancient tower on the Irish coast. His thoughts are mostly far from bank accounts, and clothes and things of this world. In a world of his own he lives, a greatly respected man with a melancholy laugh. He it was who introduced Rabindranath Tagore to the West.

He has recently edited *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*.

